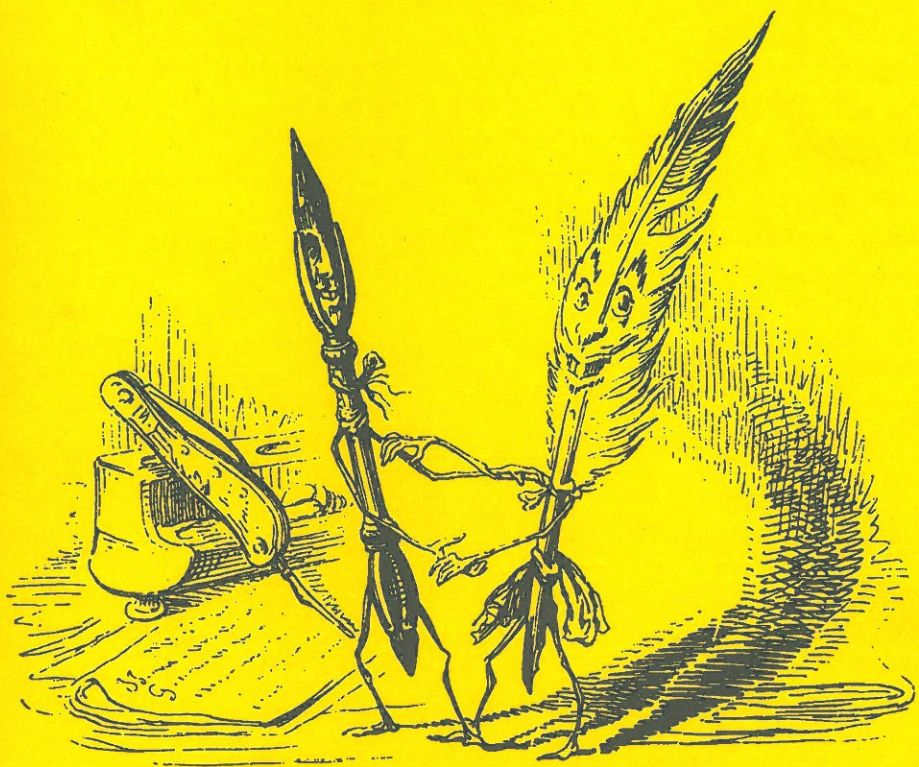

MEASURE



Literary Magazine

Measure

Spring 1993

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Table of Contents

1	Constant Care	Robert Garrity
1	The Road Collapsed	Anonymous
2	The Forest	Frances L. Schwartz
3	Were I the Lord of a Manor Where You Were a Maid	Jonathan Michiels
4	Madwoman of Chaillot: The President's Revenge	Jon Nichols
7	Sketch	DeLea Johnson
8	Ballad of the Wandering Soul	Becky Facemyer
9	String of Pearls	Delea Johnson
10	Where Do I Go from Here, Lord?	Shelly Robertson
12	Marseilles	Jonathan Michiels
13	Society	Becky Facemyer
14	And Thus Spoke Fabian	Anonymous
16	Sketch	DeLea Johnson
17	Because I Weep	John D. Groppe
18	Coming and Going	Kara M. Costa
19	Autumn	Greg Potts
20	Untitled	Grendel
22	Obscurity	Becky Facemyer
23	"Fallen"	Kirk Sullivan
24	There is an Eternity of Waiting for Those Who Love Women	Jonathan Michiels
25	Seed	Frances L. Schwartz
25	The Answer to Life Is...	Anonymous
26	Red Umbrella	Becky Facemyer
27	Crackerjack Man	John D. Groppe
28	Black Mariah--The Queen Kills	Jon Nichols
30	Mother Says I Come on Too Strong	Jonathan Michiels
31	Vistor's Day	Amy Lynne Ceadar
32	Let it be a Flower	Greg Potts
33	Ghosts	Becky Facemyer
34	Peace	Frances L. Schwartz
35	Awaiting My Ferry Across the Channel	Jonathan Michiels

Constant Care

Robert Garrity

A January oak bows high above
My snow-topped roof like thinning, uncombed hair
Atop an aging giant who in care
Looks down upon my home with dendral love.
Next August when the cooing mourning dove
Lives in that tree and moans its avian air,
The oaken giant will presume to wear
A verdant growth it boasts so proudly of.
Could sparrow, dove and finch but winter see
And know their summer to have grown so thin,
The world might show them as it does to me
How winter signals summer to begin.
If God continues caring in the cold,
Then winter can be borne as one grows old.

The Road Collapsed

Anonymous

The dust from the tires settled
among the rocks
Two men stood facing the West
each with bitter eyes
Never to make their destination
the road collapsed as the
far-reaching sun fell from the sky
Dumb, dumb, dumb is the road...kill all
fish

The Forest

Frances L. Schwartz

The Forest.
Dank, moist, lush.
The Bird of Paradise is heard.
His fluty voice,
As beautiful as he.
Colors, bright but subtle,
Shine in the Forest like the
Sun.

The Forest.
Cold, dark, wet.
The owl is heard.
His soft cooing voice,
Matches his coat.
Colors, drab but vibrant,
Blend in the Forest like the
Moon.

Were I the Lord of a Manor Where You Were a Maid

Jonathan Michiels

Were I the Lord of a manor where you
were a maid, could muster courage enough
to tell you how much my fondness grows through
the days, even when you handle me rough.

Rat's bane coursing through my cobalt veins...
"Kitten, put me out of my misery!"
I pray. While poison seeps into my brain
feed me sweetmeats up on the balcony.

And let me lie in rapture on your lap,
like the dear sweet kitten that you are,
pet my velveteen fur coat while I nap
and then devour me like a Wonder Bar!

Be gay and merry, abandon reason.
Come here darling kitty, 'tis the season.

Madwoman of Chaillot II: The President's Revenge

Jon Nichols

Tea in Chaillot had always been a great affair. In the small French town, it was thought that there was nothing quite as pleasing to the palate as tea and gizzards.

Madame Aurelia gazed about her cellar. Gabrielle, Josephine, and Constance had joined her for the afternoon. It had been a pleasant and restful visit, since all had become right in Chaillot. Those who sought to destroy the city had they themselves been destroyed. Lured by the promise of oil, Aurelia had fooled the entrepreneurs into falling into the center of the earth...into Hell itself.

And there was much rejoicing in the streets of Chaillot within the week after that. The festivities took on the grandeur and pageantry of a scale never seen before. It was all like a really bad French play.

"My, but I do like Sunday afternoons," Gabrielle finally spoke, placing her tea cup back upon its saucer. "They're always so restful!"

"Of course. It is much easier to rest now that the city is safe," Constance stated, picking something out of her teeth.

"I heard that after the disappearance of the President and the Board Members was made public, the stock value of their organization caused a collapse from within. Whether you know it or not Countess, you have struck a blow for freedom that has been felt all around the world. And they dare call us Madwomen!" Josephine explained with great happiness.

The Countess merely laughed to herself and glanced towards the brick door that led to Hell as she thought she had heard a small noise. The mortar was coming loose and needed replacement. She would make a mental note of it.

"If madness is opposing capitalism and laughing while all those men worked and bled for fell to ruin, then yes! Let me be mad!" the Countess asserted as the rest of the table laughed.

But as they laughed, yet more crumbling noises came from the door. Was it really in that dire need of repair? Irma, the deaf-mute, and the waitress from the cafe above came bolting downstairs for a reason that the Madwomen did not know.

"Are you all right, Countess?" Irma asked. The deaf-mute signed with increasing alarm.

"Yes. Why wouldn't we be?" Countess Aurelia asked with a sense of bewilderment. "Constance, please hand me my boa."

"We heard sounds of moaning and screaming coming from below! We wondered if we should call a policeman!" the Waitress explained.

At long last, the brick door in the cellar gave way. The masonry flew apart and a cold, stinking gust of air filled the room. It was as if someone had opened the door to a freezer at a slaughterhouse. The seven women were unable to lift their eyes from the gaping hole, transfixed with the idea that someone...or something was about to emerge from it. It began with one blackened hand reaching from the edge of the hole.

Three figures then emerged. They were mangled, twisted versions of men...men that appeared as if they had been put through a meat grinder. Wraith-like, demonic, yet strangely...familiar. Yes, the Countess soon realized who they were, and soon did the other women. The Baron. The Broker. The Prospector. They had returned. And as a fourth figure appeared behind them, draped in dark bat-like wings, the Countess soon felt a feeling we call terror. For even a Madwoman can know fear.

"Countess..." the President spoke. "We have come from the bottom of Hell for you."

"You'll never take her!" the Waitress screamed, throwing herself in front of the Countess.

The Broker was the first to reach her. His claws and razor-honed fangs dissected the Waitress piece by piece. Blood flew onto Josephine's face as the carnage began. The Prospector and the Baron began to exact their revenge, ripping, shredding, bathing the cellar walls and floor in red.

In a futile and infantile gesture, the deaf-mute grabbed a broomstick that lay idle in the corner of the basement. She attempted to defend herself, but the hideous Baron only found the act to be laughable. Cackling, the Baron wrapped his scaly hands around the deaf-mute and dragged her down into the mouth of Hell with him.

And finally, the President approached the Countess. Aurelia foolishly moved to the other side of the table from him. But one look into green-yellow eyes of the Hellbeast convinced her. This was the end. No thing, no one, no god could save her now. Even a Madwoman can scream in terror.

"Countess...perhaps you will join me in Hell?" with a movement of his black wings, the President separated her head from her shoulders. Even a Madwoman bleeds red. Even a Madwoman can die.

The President glanced over at an overturned chair that was beside an overlooked victim. The horrified Gabrielle lay in a quivering ball, aghast at all she had seen. The President looked over his shoulder and watched the Broker and the Prospector slither back into the hole.

"I am...sorry, Gabrielle. You were not the cause of what happened to me. But they cared nothing for you as well." He extended his gnarled and leathery hand. "Come with me, and we will rule Hell side by side." Gabrielle only turned her face and sobbed into her shoulder, unable to look at the deformed President.

With disappointed demeanor, the President turned back towards the hole. As he floated back into the Abyss, Gabrielle stared and wondered. Should she have gone with him? For what Hell is greater...the one he was going to or the one she was in? For the one she was in...she faced alone.

"Hell ain't a bad place
Hell is from here to eternity" --Iron Maiden



Ballad of the Wandering Soul

Becky F.

I never had place
I could call home,
I never wanted to be tied down
as a bird with wings
that are clipped;
what a small price I pay
for all of my freedom,
satisfied to drift from place-to-place
unencumbered,
stopping in each
only for a while
before the urge came again
to move on.
I never wanted arms to hold me
for more than a few days
at a time,
I wanted to see
and to taste
and to touch
everything I could
in the short time I had,
and I've lived a life
full of experiences
many others don't have.

String of Pearls

DeLea Johnson

Big Sister told me a story
about a gift Mama had given her,
a string of pearls.
She told me that Mama placed them in her hand and said,
"This is a special gift
and don't let anyone take it from you."
One evening, Big Sister went for a walk
and was gone for a very long time.
While she was out, I sneaked in her jewelry box
to play with her
string of pearls.
They were gone.
I looked down and saw them rolling across the floor.
Later that night
I tip-toed to the window
and saw Big Sister sitting on a cloud.
She flew down
and placed a brand new string of pearls in my hand.
She then whispered in my ear,
"This is a special gift
and don't let anyone take it from you."

Where Do I Go from Here, Lord?

Shelly Robertson

It took a lot of humility; self-denial
But I finally did it.
I got down on my knees and prayed this morning
And asked the Lord
What would become of me.
In desperation,
Instead of being in control,
Instead of taking control of my own fate,
(Like they keep telling me I must)
I put my life into His hands.
I knew that if I did that,
I would suddenly somehow understand
And be able to move fearlessly forward.

I asked Him where I would go from here.
I asked Him to tell me what to do.
I asked Him to make me rich and famous and happy and true.
But He did not answer my questions.
And I'm the same person today that I was yesterday.
I couldn't help but wonder
What good is prayer?
Does God ever listen?

So I got up off my knees and moved on
again in total control
thinking today would be the same as yesterday;
still not knowing the answers.
But I was thinking of Him, nevertheless.

Strangely enough,
there was nothing entertaining on tv today.
I didn't win the lottery. And I didn't care.
I took my problems for a walk.
We went to the park.

There were children there,
And my problems left me
for awhile.

When I got back home and looked in the mirror,
I didn't see a movie star.
I knew I had a lot of work to do,
But I put it aside and spent my time with others.
Time went slow today.
Before dinner, I watched the sun set.

Tonight I thought,
I'd try again.
I got down on my knees and prayed.
I asked Him to tell me what to do.
I asked him to make me rich and famous and happy and true.

Once again, He didn't answer.
But I felt the need to thank Him.
After all, I'd made something of today.
I'd seen the children,
Watched the sunset...
Made new friends.
What more could there be?
And I found I didn't want to go anywhere.
He had answered my prayer.

Marseilles

Jonathan Michiels

Found a girl named Elise in the cafe
licking spumoni from a sugar cone.
She'd come from the first film show in Marseilles.,
a pretty young waif who'd gone all alone.

I bought her a tumbler of grenadine
and said, "We saw our first film together...
in America, that would mean something."
She felt that we were not made for each other.

I tried to explain how when am in love
am not in a prurient sort of mood,
and when I left I left behind my gloves
which she mailed to me, which I fancied rude.

I wanted to retrieve them from her lair,
to dance and arrange flowers in her hair.

Society

Becky F.

Did you go
to the right school,
take the right classes,
make the right friends?

Did you learn
all that they taught you,
did you answer questions well,
are you everything
we hoped that you could be?

Nobody really asks you these questions,
but you know they all wonder
when they look at you,
fresh out of college
with the world at your feet.
They only ask you
if you got the job you hoped for.

They won't tell you
what's important,
you'll find that out on your own,
they only tell you
when you do something wrong.

But what does any of this matter
in the end,
lying in a nursing home
when you're seventy
and they're all gone?

No one ever asks
if you are happy.

And Thus Spoke Fabian...

Anonymous

Fabian was nervous. And well he should be, since this sort of thing was well out of his league. But if what he and his friends had planned came to pass, they would attain status far above and beyond that of rudimentary class "teen angels." They would achieve...immortality.

"Let's get this gig on the road, man!" Fabian said to his friend, James Dean, who was manning the controls to the giant machine. "I don't want to be late or nothin'."

"It's a time machine. We can get you there whenever you want," James replied. "I need only to throw this switch...."

James Dean activated the device and a shimmering portal appeared before Fabian.

"Cool, daddy-o! See ya, in a few!" With that, Fabian bravely stepped into the vortex.

"Fabe-ho!" James cheered his friend on.

Fabian ventured through a swirling nebula of color and shape. In fact, if he wasn't such a cool guy, his inner ear probably would have been affected and his sense of direction and balance would have been totally and unquestionably negated. But that was for lesser men...not for Fabian.

When Fabian had crossed through the portal, he emerged in a stately room that was bathed in a pattern of colors identical to that of a kaleidoscope. As the pattern subsided, the eyes of Fabian beheld that the room was decorated with candles and incense-laden altars. A full buffet was arranged on a table in the back. It was rather Dionysian, really.

The congregation was comprised of the greatest writers and artists of 19th century England. Oscar Wilde, Aubrey Beardsley, and Charles Dickens to name but a few. He had done it. Fabian had made his way back in time over one hundred years.

"It's him! It's the great one!" someone shouted. The banging of bongos cleared the way as Fabian stood amongst them.

"My friends," Fabian spoke. "I have traveled far to this...the first meeting of THE FABIAN SOCIETY! Cool huh?"

"What is this?" H.G. Wells objected. "I thought that this was a meeting of socialists! It's just malarky, and I'm going home!"

"SILENCE!!" Fabian commanded, as the room was bathed in the pattern of the kaleidoscope yet again. In awe, the congregation nearly ceased to breathe as they stood transfixed before Fabian.

"Hear me...and hear my commandments on this....this most excellent of nights! I command you to worship me! Worship me, with...THIS!"

The group of artists nearly suffered a collective coronary as many bizarre images floated in the air about them. The number six, a woman's high-heeled shoe, Elvis, Marilyn Monroe, Donnie Osmond's purple socks, Liberace, and the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles to name but a paltry few.

"What manner of magnificance is this?" one was heard to question.

"This...." Fabian replied, "is a MONTAGE!!! And let this be your greatest tribute! For there is another! Yes, another! A man shall rise in the latter decade of the the 20th century with whom we shall all be vindicated."

"Who is this man? We don't understand!" a cry announced.

"He will revitalize the world of art and literature through the use of a grassroots foundation of college newspapers. And his temple of sanctity shall be...THE MONTAGE!"

Again, the group stood breathless. And sadly, Fabian turned away as the doorway to his home re-opened.

"My work is done here. I shall go." As quickly as he arrived, Fabian departed.

And the rest is history...



Debra Johnson '93

Because I Weep

John D. Groppe

I weep for you, my children,
because you do not weep.
You ask me to cleave
the actor from the act
and accept you always
as my children,
and so you dare presume
and come smiling home
with bloodied hands and loins,
bellies and pockets filled,
your arms open for my embrace,
but hesitate,
not because I scowl
but because I weep.

Coming and Going

Kara M. Costa

In our lives we encounter many people.
Some bring laughter and happiness
Others are simply partners in business.
Some show love, warmth or concern
And usually those ask for nothing in return.
There are others whose accepted presence they try to sell,
It is they we cannot soon enough bid farewell.
Some stay a lifetime
They fit into our lives like lines of a poem that rhyme.
Others we beg to stay,
But they still go away.
There are those who wear out their welcome.
And although people come and go,
Be them friend or foe,
Sometimes people live on long after we are apart.
In fact, some continue to hold a special place in our heart.

Autumn

Greg Potts

Luscious green vegetation- once
sticky sweet with sugar and sucrose.

Now turning golden brown
in the sunset.

Night is coming-
against the water color wash sky.

Gray- blue- red- mix
as if in an ocean.

An explosion of color- like flecks of paint
on a tumbling purple canvas.

Night is coming- soon a frosted sleep
will transcend the land.

Nothing will show under the blank-
white shroud of winter.

Nature bursts forth- in the final hours-
beautiful and wondrous- and
rages glorious in the face of death.

(Untitled)

Grendel

He sneaked in like a thief in the night, gathered his things and left. He didn't say a word to anyone. We found out hours, maybe even days later from friends and bystanders. The rumor was academics, but no one is really sure. His flunking out is an easy answer to accept, unless, of course, you knew him.

We had converged on the university three years ago, a ragtag band of adventurers preparing for a journey of discovery, hoping to uncover the mysteries of life, love, and what our futures held for us. We were young and naive, and in many respects, innocent of the ways of the world. But we were full of hope and candor and the thrill of being along.

When our travels began, there were nine of us. We all had different goals and backgrounds, but we shared common interests and a sense of camaraderie. We came from different worlds, but we felt like family. It seemed appropriate that we should share this quest for knowledge of the unknown.

As the years progressed our numbers dwindled and swelled as we picked up fellow wanderers and as it became apparent that it was time for our paths to part. Some had different destinies to fulfill, others simply flitted in and out of our lives with whimsy reminding us of battles lost and won in the war of life. But we always said farewell. And remember.

We fought. We bickered. We had contests of will, but in times of strife we fought as one, combining our strength to protect our brethren. There was an unspoken knowledge that no matter how far apart our paths took us, we would always be together in our hearts, and in times of need we would be able to depend on each other for assistance before it was time for our paths to part once more, and again, it was time to say goodbye.

It was important to say goodbye. To answer questions left unasked, to give of yourself to the one that might need your strength and your knowledge on their search through life. Most importantly, though, it was for the knowledge that things did not go unfinished.

Most went their own way, others died. One died in a drunken driving accident, another on a battlefield in a distant land when a bullet

penetrated his skull, leaving him without a face to be buried with. But even then, we were able to say goodbye, even if it was with a burial.

We said goodbye to all of them, except for one. He disappeared in a shroud of mystery and shame, leaving us with questions and doubts, taking with him only momentos and memories. For those of us who knew him, we know it was more than just academics. All we do know is that he didn't even say goodbye.

We started this journey together like pilgrims on a quest. We collected stragglers along the way, and helped others to find their path. Reba, Paul, and I are all that are left of the group of adventurers that met that warm summer day so long ago. There are many questions left unanswered, but they no longer seem as important now. What we have gained can not be measured in material things, what we have learned cannot be explained. We still have the same desires, but they no longer burn with the same intensity.

The little skirmishes we have fought have made us seasoned veterans at the game we play. Preparing us for the battles we have yet to fight and enabling us to look on with amusement and concern, and occasionally disdain, as others prepare to make the same journey. May they fare as well as we did.

Obscurity

Becky F.

I am a small, black dot
on a broad horizon
that one must squint
in order to see.
Few know of my existence,
and fewer than those care
if I live or if I die.
Obscurity,
that is what I feel today.
I wonder if I am noticed,
if anyone would comment
were I not here
among the millions of stars
that reach down
to touch human eyes every night.
At times, I wish I was the brightest star
that everyone wishes on,
but after thinking on it,
I decided that I like to be obscure
and I am comfortable
that all those people
do not know
who I am.



There Is an Eternity of Waiting for Those Who Love Women

Jonathan Michiels

My ennui stretches across the gray clouds.
Where apple blossoms cluster round hyacinths
her frame lies. No foul thought ought be allowed
to cloud her eyes which are green like absinthe.

To have come 'cross her upon a velvet
divan, when she was dreaming, her wan, fair
cheeks rouged with powdered mulberries met
by kisses and caresses, was so rare.

Awaken heart, ensconced as you are in
a pocket of marble, and I will live
the love ferried to me by seraphim
from her boudoir, for I crave what she gives.

Undulating swan upon ice lake,
know that but from her heart shall my soul slake.

Seed

Frances L. Schwartz

What do we plant
when we plant the seed?

We plant the note
That begins the song.

We plant the tune
That carries the verse.

The note, the tune,
The thoughts, the verse.

We plant a song
When we plant the seed.

The Answer to Life Is...

Anonymous

Two tired fish sat talking the other
day of life with a bigger bowl....
The rocks agreed....
So did the water....
The answer to life is more water and
and dried tuna

Red Umbrella

Becky F.

Me and a broken red umbrella,
down the sidewalk
in the rain,
the morning sun
at my left
tries to break through clouds
that won't yield
as the raindrops
beat faster
upon the red umbrella
and upon my back,
and the puddles
soak my feet
right through my shoes.
But isn't that the way
life goes
sometimes,
raining down upon you
until you are past
the point of frustration
and you don't care any more?
And all you have
to give you shelter
from the tempest
is a broken, red umbrella.

Crackerjack Man

John D. Groppe

Uncle to many, father to none,
holder of hands,
Crackerjack buyer,
pusher of park swings and see saws,
revealer of track meets and ball games,
Madison Square Garden and Yankee Stadium,
companion on my journey to wed,
traveller to the Wailing Wall and Juneau,
fox hole poet,
elevator operator,
roustabout doing cartwheels on the Great Sand Dunes,
disappointed in childlessness--I am sure--
but grace giving to children,
ever yourself a child,
weeping when we left you to free your body of alcohol,
even in diapers with your colon removed,
when I walk in parks and zoos holding others' hands,
when I cheer in other stadiums
or run, quickly breathless, on crowdless tracks,
I thank you and know the prize was you.

Black Mariah--The Queen Kills

Jon Nichols

Somewhere in Arizona....

The tan Buick pulled up next to the convenience store just as the body was being brought out. Local authorities were on the scene already, sealing off the crime scene. The Lieutenant left the Buick and placed a hat upon his bald head to shield him from the blazing mid-day sun.

"I'm Detective Crocker, this is Detective Stavros, and this is our Lieutenant," Crocker said to the local sheriff. "We're the task force from Phoenix."

"Howdy. What brings you fellas here?" the sheriff inquired.

"Your stiff in there is a special envoy from the FCC. That makes it our jurisdiction, baby," the Lieutenant explained, lighting his cigarette. He began to push his way towards the store. "ID on the deceased?"

"Man's name was Ryan K. Trimmoms. He apparently stopped in for a taco and a Coke, and started to ogle this check-out clerk," the sheriff pointed at a Hispanic woman in her mid twenties. She was 5'10", had sparkling brown eyes, and a look upon her face of neither innocence nor remorse for the deceased Mr. Trimmoms.

"Seems Trimmoms knew a little Spanish and decided to strike up a conversation with this lady," the sheriff continued.

"What's wrong with that?" Stavros asked.

"Well, her boyfriend also knew Spanish. His name is Julio Pantera. After a while, he got so agitated that he pulled a gun and shot Trimmoms. He was shot three times with this automatic," the sheriff held the gun by a pencil. "At that range, Trimmoms didn't stand a chance."

"Hey pal!" Crocker started up. "Learn about guns before you talk about them!"

"Geez, you sound like a pretentious editor with an inflated idea of self-importance," the sheriff retorted.

"Uh-huh," the Lieutenant thought. "May I use the phone?"

"Sure. It's right back there."

Crocker and Stavros examined the part of the floor where Trimmoms fell. The sheriff had already made a tape outline and forensics people were taking samples.

"We gotta nail this guy. To the wall," Crocker swore. "Trimmoms didn't mean for anything. He didn't ask for any of this!"

"Mebbe not. But in these parts, a man doesn't talk to another man's woman that way. Just the way it is. I know that Trimmons didn't know that but...well, what can we do now? I say we put 'culture shock' as the cause of death," the sheriff stated, feeling the after effects of the burrito he had earlier.

"Thank you," the Lieutenant said into the phone before hanging up. He turned to his men. "Crocker! When we get to town I want you to pull the file on Julio Pantera. I wanna know arrest records, I wanna know convictions, I wanna know his favorite color, understand? This is one time the D.A. might make something stick on this guy!"

"Yessir," Crocker replied.

"And uh...take the dolly girl with us. We'll need her for questioning," the Lieutenant pointed at the woman, still staring with the same eerie smile.

"Right, Lt," Stavros took the Hispanic woman by the arm and began to lead her out of the building.

They wouldn't hold her. She would be released, for she did nothing wrong. But then, she would have to move again. Doing the same thing, town to town, person to person. That's how she lived. All this she thought as she held her possessions: the Queen of Spades and a new Stealy Dan tape...courtesy of Ryan K. Trimmons, FCC. After all, ABBA was just too cool for him.

Mother Says I Come on Too Strong

Jonathan Michiels

Renee Ridge languidly lies on her bed
leafing through vintage cinema fan-zines.
A laurel wreath crowns her head entwining
her pubescent mind, lustful and torrid.

A rusting tricycle hangs in the shed
near to where her father is landscaping
shrubbery into ballet figurines
by flashlight while the neighbors catch their zeds.

Her father threatened to vivisect her
unless Renee mends her Sapphic love ways.
Her best friend, Laurel Searfoss, telephones;

"Dark blossoms sprout in my mind nowadays,"
Renee says, lost in a tribadist haze.
"For my nature I shall never atone."

(Let the ballerina figurines dance
to the ice cream girl's chimes as she drives down
the boulevard. Let the unbridled girls prance
wearing lipstick thick as a birthday clown's.)

Visitor's Day

Amy Lynne Ceader

She sits in the wheelchair,
Crumpled quilt in her lap.
Gray at her temples.
Dirty, scratched bifocals
Slipping down her nose.
Her bottom plate is missing,
Bright red polish on her nails,
Pictures of her family adorn
the small table in her room.

Her memory is as foggy
as the San Francisco Bay.

Her lips are painted,
Her cheeks rouged.

She used to dance
Once upon a time.

Today is Visitor's Day at
the home.

She peers out the doorway,
To see if he has come.

It turns late,
No sight of her loved one.

She gets into bed
and turns out the light.

Let it be a Flower

Greg Potts

Red budded poppy
the color of blood,

Ironic- symbol of comrades fallen
on muddy fields of no-man's land.

Symbol of unpure blood in disease driven veins
and junk wreaked brain.

The poppy, master of lives lost,
lives shrouded in darkness.

Unforgiving symbol.
Let it be a flower.

Ghosts

Becky F.

Stopping at the water's edge,
we cup our hands to drink,
the bitter water
soothing to parched tongues,
and we rest
beneath the green-leaved trees,
enjoying the wind
that shakes them.
We climb the rocky hilltop
until we reach its crest
and peer down at all around us,
wide and open,
and seemingly devoid of life.
And we weep weary tears
for all that we've lost
that will never be found again,
and we speak of dreams
that once filled our hearts
and our heads,
that are forever gone.
And we gaze long at ourselves,
now only ghosts
of the people we used to be.

Peace

Frances L. Schwartz

The cool crisp air
Surrounds me.
The intricate
Silhouettes of the
Bare trees are
Etched into the vast
Pink-purple sky.

A bright twinkle
Gleams and the
Last puffy clouds
Slide down the horizon.

The tiny bird swoops and
Then glides down to its
Nest to sleep.
Peace.

Awaiting My Ferry Across the Channel

Jonathan Michiels

A poison green carnation blooms upon
my lapel as I await the ferry boat.
Iridescent nautical pennants float
on wind which feathers my hair in the sun.

A leather bound volume is my talisman
tucked under the arm of my chambray coat.
The wave licked ship glides in across the moat,
strung with tethered life preservers, to land.

The sailors are Tom of Finland drawings
but some were etched by Jean Cocteau
while others were sketched by Stephen Tennant.

A porthole to disaster covered in dew
allots my eyes a most Uranian view
of all the Nautilus' residents.

To Ezra

Greg Potts

I shudder to think of you
Ezra, imprisoned in some allied
prison camp in Peza-

Your only crime being
you were a pigheaded ex-patriot,
who grumbled too loud and long
about the old bitch-

Saddened I am to think of your genius
shackled in the manacles of insanity
until you drowned
in the tears that you caused-

We, a lost generation,
four score and some odd years,
are still held prisoners
to the botched civiliation-

Flashes

John Negovetich

The water falls freely
freely falling through the trees,
whose leaves and branches stretch up so high-
almost to my dreams.
The black of night shades the air
and the rain that's falling down,
like the spring time shadows beneath each flower;
moisture covers the ground.
Clouds disperse, wet becomes dry-
spring flowers die, summers inverse,
but I am an observer, removed from it all
with my head in the stars as they burst.
Lightning flashes - thunder roars!
Peace is slain by the echoes of power,
but the shadows remain, wet is still wet.
Shadows; the inevitable death of the flower.

Who Are You?

Kara M. Costa

Who are you impersonating my friend
With that bold appearance
And stuck-up greeting you send?

You are she you say?
But this can't be true
Because my *friend* would never treat me this way.

Besides, I don't recognize your tone of voice.
So, if you are she, was it something I did,
Or did you change it by choice?

Your cocky attitude,
Your many masks must be blinding you
Because you have been nothing but rude.

Maybe you should start thinking about these things.
All your thoughtless actions
Are beginning to sting.

Spare me the excuses and the pain.
I thought you were my best friend.
Don't you feel the strain?

Oh, I know one day you'll come 'round
When all the rest of your distractions are gone,
But I, too, will be nowhere to be found.

That's what you do to me:
Put our friendship on hold
Because you're too blind to see.

No, I am sure jealousy is not the word;
Frustrated and hurt,
Those adjectives are not absurd.

But don't you fret,
I'll be just fine with all our memories
And without regret-

You've taught me a lot
About what is friendship
And what is not.

Appearances

Jennifer Anderson

The people that have the answers refuse to stop asking questions.

The people that are ignorant act as if they are knowledgeable.

The sensitive people pretend to be strong, untouchable.

The masks that people wear reflect their need to hide from things they do not understand and things they cannot change.



Full Marital Jacket

Jon Nichols

"I don't even know how it happened! God, I've really freakin' done it this time!"

"Simon, calm down," the Doctor ordered. "You've been seeing me for six months now, we should be able to talk about your problems together. I would think that this would get easier with time."

"This ain't what it usually is Doc," Simon replied, pulling another cigarette from his pocket. He stood before the Doctor in his usual ripped jeans, black Biocide t-shirt, and enough chains and necklaces to tie down the Titanic. "I have really screwed things this time."

"Sit and talk," the Doctor said without lifting his gaze. Simon reluctantly placed himself in the green-cushioned chair before the desk. He exhaled and a stream of smoke flew towards the Doctor. "You're on your fifth cigarette. You usually average only three per session."

"This...situation started just a few hours ago," Simon began, puffing away at the cigarette. "And understand that I'm fighting one hell of a headache. I'm fighting the mother of all hangovers."

"I see."

"I woke up this morning at about ten o'clock. I had just come off what I thought was a hard night of drinking."

"So when I woke up, I just sorta lay there for a while, y'know? I started taking my rings off. I took off my skullring, my other ring, my Julio Iglesias ring...and that's when I found it."

"Found what?" the Doctor queried.

"This." Simon extended a small object that caught the light with an incredible sparkle. Upon closer inspection, the Doctor found that it was undeniably a diamond engagement ring. "I knew it could only mean one thing, so I jumped out of bed and screamed in agony."

"I freaked. Dude, I mean I FREAKED!! I threw on some clothes and drove off looking for the other guys to see what the hell was going on. And as I was driving away, I found out that it was three days later. THREE DAYS! I had been in a drunken stupor for three days! I didn't remember what I had done!"

"Theodore wasn't home, Alvin was passed out in the desert, and Lars was too stoned to remember anything. And so as I turned down Redondo, I knew that the only thing I could hope for was that Nikki was down at the hamburger joint we usually hang at. Lucky for me, he

was having a beer and a sandwich while talking to the guys in the band Arrogant Editor.

"I asked Nikki what was up with this, and he told me. I was getting married. I got engaged to this broad while I was stone-cold, off my ass drunk! Freakin' married, I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!!"

"Do you know the woman? Does she come to your shows?" the Doctor finally asked after allowing Simon time to calm himself.

"Yeah," he said, blowing more smoke out of his nose. His gaze became more pensive and it became obvious that he was about to say his next sentence with great trepidation. "She's our lawyer."

"Good God! A lawyer!" the Doctor began to scribble in his notebook.

"And when I finally went back to my place, my red Ferrari was gone. SHE TRADED IT IN FOR A STATION WAGON!! I went inside my house and there were plants everywhere! She'd moved all her things in! Doc, ya gotta do something!" Simon wailed.

"Dammit Simon, I'm a doctor not a divorce attorney!" the Doctor explained. Simon stood and paced in a frustrated pattern.

"If I dump her, she could ruin the band. Hands down," he said with a certain terror in his voice. "So much for the opening slot for Megadeath. But if I stay with her to save the band, it's be a lot worse.

"I'd never get to drink again...no more all-night pool playing...I'd never see the guys again...hell, she might even make me quit the band and go raise sheep in Idaho, or something stupid like that!" Simon fell to his knees, and glistening light appeared beneath his eyelids. If the Doctor didn't know Simon so well, he would almost say that they were tears. "I'd be better off dead."

The Doctor had never studied philosophy. But he didn't have to comprehend the profound torture that Simon was in. The Doctor could only watch as the life Simon loved dissolved before his eyes. The free rocking spirit that was Simon Le Bain was chained and imprisoned in a structure far more foreboding and impenetrable than a mere prison cell. For there is no Alcatraz, there is no Devil's Island, there is no Arkham Asylum more confining than a single band of gold soldered to a man's ring finger.

200 a.m.

Becky F.

Two a.m. already,
all's quiet
but the cricket in the hall,
just me and my rocking chair
assessing my life:
all the broken promises
and the empty bottles of beer
that mean nothing now,
but each hurt me in its own time
and in its own way.

Pictures strewn about me:
images of times past
and those not long ago,
and only some that I remember.

It's funny how we say things
and we mean them,
but we always forget.

